WHAT'S UP AND COMING IN COMICS! HOT PICKS!

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VANTAGE™

COMIC & CARD PICKS

Inside information for comic dealers and collectors!

#16

USA $2.95 / Canada $3.99 December 1995

DC VERSUS MARVEL

- PREDICTIONS!
- CONTEST!
- INTERVIEW!
- INSIDE INFO!

COMICS & SCI FI ONLINE!

Cybertrog By Ethan Van Sciver

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COOL DECEMBER TITLES FROM ENTITY!

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by Harold Buchholz

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VANTAGE™ COMIC & CARD PICKS

number Sixteen

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Phone: 414-797-8221. Fax: 414-797-7960. America Online: RobVantage. Internet: RobVantage@aol.com (this gets you Rob Golub, you lucky dog). One year subscription (12 monthly issues): $34.95. One year subscription to the market guide only (12 monthly issues): $49.50 (roster limited). We welcome submissions (articles), comments, new advisors, press releases, product ideas, and free money. Write or call. We don't bite. Call or write for advertising rates. Limitations may apply. Mission: To provide comic retailers, dealers, and mature collectors with information, logical analysis, and entertainment not generally available to the public.

TOP PICK OF THE MONTH

DC Versus Marvel #1 (DC Comics / Introduces major new characters)

MORE VANTAGE PICKS

Creed #2, Butt-Naked Variant (Lightning Comics / Strange variant from up and comer)

Captain America, all (Marvel / Waid, rebirth of hero)

Cyberfrog #1-2 (Hall of Heroes / First appearance of Cyberfrog)

Cyberfrog #1-up (Harris Comics / Harris relaunch of this fresh, cool, different sort of comic)

Gen 13/Maxx (Image / Wildstorm / Two hot properties)

Green Lantern/Silver Surfer (DC Comics / Minor Marvel Versus DC lead-in)

Moebius Comics #1-up (Calibur / Moebius is cool)

Prime, all (Marvel / Malibu / Ultraverse / Motion picture looms closer)

Seekers #1 (DC Comics / Vertigo / New Vertigo ongoing, cool premise)

Sensational Spider-Man #1-up (Marvel / early issue of new Spider-title)

Ultraforce, all (Marvel / Malibu / Ultraverse / TV cartoon)

WATCH FOR THE VANTAGE STAR INDICATING OUR TOP PICKS!

Vantage is opposed to speculation, which we define as the purchase of comics by a fan solely for the purpose of selling quickly to others. The difficulty in speculating is that the comic market fluctuates quickly and dealers will not pay full market value for your books even when they do go up (they have to resell them). Vantage is intended for use by 1) Retailers 2) Show dealers 3) Fans who buy comics mainly for reading, but who also have an interest in the marketplace.

- Publisher Rob Golub

STARSHIP ONLINE IS A MAG, I TELL YOU

Well, the **Starship Online** launch is coming along nicely. Previews gave us a Spotlight for the launch and Advance Comics gave us a hot flash. Our retailer incentive program is very aggressive, and articles on Starship Online Magazine are now appearing in Diamond Dateline, Diamond Dialogue, and Capital's Internal Correspondence.

The promotion of **Starship Online** may be going according to plan, but of course it can't go without a hitch. The hitch is that some people think that Starship Online is online. That is, people sometimes think **Starship Online** is some sort of Internet area. So here I am to set the record straight. Starship Online is a paper, hard copy, tree-killing magazine, due out in January. It will look a lot like an issue of **Vantage**, except it will cover comics and sci fi by modem.

As a comics fan I know there's truth to the idea that a picture is worth a thousand words, so let me make my point by showing you rather than explaining. A sample mini-issue of **Starship Online Magazine** can be found at the center of this issue of **Vantage!** I invite you to have a flip through it and let me know what you think. At least you'll think it's a paper magazine, I hope.

– Rob Golub
Publisher

CYBERFROG

MAY BE THE NEXT SMALL PRESS SUCCESS STORY

Maybe there's something in the water over in Elkhart, Indiana. For some reason, the **Hall of Heroes** has established a reputation for discovering fresh talent. Having found Trent Kaniuga (Creed) and Mathew Martin (Snowman, covered last issue), the company can now stick a third feather in its cap.

The third feather is Cyberfrog, from creator-owner Ethan Van Sciver. Back in the old days when Kaniuga and Martin were working for Hall of Heroes, they used to review submissions for the company. It was Kaniuga and Martin who were impressed with Van Sciver's work, and who suggested that he work for Hall of Heroes, Van Sciver told **Vantage**.

Van Sciver's first comics work was thus the two comic books he did for Hall of Heroes — **Cyberfrog** #1 and #2. Only two issues were published with Hall of Heroes, for Harris Comics (publishers of Vampirella) scooped up Van Sciver to do a mini-series for them.

The next appearance of **Cyberfrog** will also be the character's full-color debut, Harris' **Cyberfrog** #1. This will be all original material.

Cyberfrog is a cross between Lobo and Alien. This really cool-looking frog-like creature maims and kills while cracking a joke or two. The story of this anti-hero is witty and gory, but the best part is the eye-candy. Van Sciver is most certianly talented, and Cyberfrog is a great looking charcter.

With little-known artists and unknown characters coming increasingly into vogue (CreeD, Double Impact, etc.), Van Sciver's Cyberfrog has all of the makings of an up and coming hit: 1) It's different 2) It's good 3) Low print runs and not from a large publisher. For the collectors market, the fact that it's a humor book could be a bit of a drag, but we still recommend it. We understand that Cyberfrog is going to be getting some nice publicity from biger players that **Vantage** within the next thirty days.

"Cyberfog avoids lofty topics like world starvation and AIDS, sticking to things that are more fin and relatable: fashion, music, stupid people, etc.," said Van Sciver. "If you want to mope, turn on the frikn' six 'o clock news — otherwise read Cyberfrog."

THOSE KIDS SOUNDED LIKE INNOCENTS, AND I DON'T KILL INNOCENTS. IT MAKE IT A POINT
THAT'S NOT THE MA PROBLEM, THOUGH. PROBLEM IS MY HOT SENSE.
IT AUTOMATICALLY GUIDS ME TO CRIME SCENES, AND ALLOWS ME TO DISTRIBUTE JUSTICE AS I SEE FIT.
Cyberfrog™ & © 1995 Ethan Van Sciver

DC VS. MARVEL TO INTRODUCE MAJOR NEW CHARACTERS

Characters™ & © 1995 Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. and DC Comics

Two new galactus-style entities will be introduced in **DC Versus Marvel/ Marvel Versus DC, Vantage** has learned. These two brand-spankin new characters have never appeared anywhere before, and are to be new, all powerful additions to the Marvel and DC universes.

While much ado is made over the coming battles, the bigger news may lie in the introduction of these new characters. In the past, new omniscient, omnipotent characters have gone on to be used again and again. A similar fate seems likely for these two.

DC Versus Marvel #1 and #3 writer Ron Marz wouldn't tell us much, but he did admit that these two new characters, bigger than Galactus, Thanos, or Darkseid, would be introduced in the first issue to breach the wall between the two universes. "We set up two cosmic beings," explained Marz, "They're completely new. We felt like we needed to do something completely new in order to make this a believable story. We didn't want to use Galactus or the Spectre or Darkseid or whatever — the existing cosmic-level characters from either company because they've been seen before."

Marz feels that the old cosmic-level characters have been over-used and their power has been diminished. "Well, if Reed Richards can defeat Galactus how does Galactus manage to break down the barriors between Marvel and DC this time? We wanted to have something that would make readers go, My god, I've never seen this before, this is completely new and different."

These two cosmic characters will first appear in **DC Versus Marvel #1**. Marz alludes to their appearance at the end of the first issue, "We kind of hint at them in the first issue and kind of raise the curtain on them at the end of the first issue, and they embody the Marvel and DC universe — a character for each universe."

"These guys are so far beyond Galactus or any character that exists in the Marvel or DC Universe that I almost hesitate to call them characters," said Marz. They're obviously physically humanoid characters but they're so powerful, so mind-boggling, that they're not villians, they're not good guys, they're sort of overriding forces.

In fact, these guys sound a lot like what Galactus used to be — all-powerful, beyond good and evil, and to some extent beyond human understanding. But through overuse and repeated defeat, characters like Galactus have lost their luster.

Marz and his colleagues appear to have invented two new beings of immense cosmic power. These two are not your father's Galactus (or should we say Galtacti?). We expect to see these two in big stories down the road (yes, even if they die by the fourth issue).

Marz says the two characters will be "humanoid, very regal galactic beings, kind of Kirbyesqe design . . . You'll really believe that these guys are the overall embodiments of the Marvel and DC universes."

DC VERSUS MARVEL: LANTERN/SURFER LEADS IN

One wields ultimate power. The other wields the ultimate weapon. Together they're a force that can save the universe — if they don't destroy it first. That's how DC pushes **Green Lantern/Silver Surfer**, due out later this month. However, even more interesting may be this one-shots tie-in with **DC Versus Marvel** and **Marvel Versus DC.**

Writer Ron Marz says that this one-shot will, to a small extent, lead into big DC versus Marvel / Marvel vs DC crossover. "There are some elements in the Lantern/Surfer job that will kind of play through the crossover," said Marz. "There are some minor elements, nothing major. We figured, since I was doing them both and since they were coming out within a few weeks of each other we might as well plant a couple of seeds. Its nothing thats absolutely necessary to the story. Its just something that anybody who reads both might get a kick out of."

Even this minor connection could send fans scrambling for Green Lantern/Silver Surfer as a back issue. With an event as big as Marvel versus DC, anything can happen.

In the one-shot, Silver Surfer is approached by DC's Parallax (the former Green Lantern, Hal Jordan). Finding common ground in their tortured pasts, the two stellar wanderers form an alliance. They pool their cosmic powers in an effort to rewrite reality — creating a universe where all past sins are erased.

At the same time, Thanos is on Earth, manipulating Terrax into wreaking havoc on New York City. Thanos does this to test the new Green Lantern. He then lures Green Lantern to the center of the universe in an attempt to harness the power of the green ring for himself.

This somehow leads Green Lantern and Silver Sufer into an all-out battle for what each beleives is right. (Don't heroes always wind up battling for what each wrongly believes is right? Gee, supertheroes sure can be stupid.) At the same time Parallax and Thanos battle. DC adds that one of these four characters will be irrevocably changed.

Silver Surfer™ & © 1995 Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc.

DC VERSUS MARVEL: WILL IT SELL? WHY A TOP PICK?

Retailers and fans alike are excited about the coming Marvel/DC four issue miniseries. By and large, even small publishers are saying that they hope it will inject the whole industry with new excitement. But some retailers are wary. "The $3.95 cover price is too high," one retailer told us. A mom told us there's no way she's dropping $3.95 for a copy of **DC Versus Marvel** #1 for her kids.

Much will depend on the level of media attention given to the mini the day the first issue hits. DC, of course, has the greater interest in pumping the sales of their issue — **DC Versus Marvel** #1. Their publicity office is quite competent, having pulled off the death of Superman media blitz. If DC can get even half as much national media coverage as they did with Superman, **DC Versus Marvel #1** could disappear in hours and become the hottest book in the country instantly.

From the show dealer's perspective, keeping a few **DC Versus Marvel** back-issues may be a good call. Even if the book doesn't disappear in hours, and even if the print run is bloated and the demand at $3.95 just isn't there, the book still introduces Galactus-style characters from each universe, and it is still a rare moment in comic book history. That's what brings it up to Top Pick Of The Month status.

Captain America™ & © 1995 Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. Batman™ & © 1995 DC Comics

LAYING IT ON THE LINE
THE WINNERS OF THE FIVE MAJOR BATTLES

Who else but Vantage has the guts to lay it on the line and make predictions? This is who we think will (and should) win each battle. Jot down your predictions in the margin and see if you can do a better job than us!

Batman vs. Captain America

Get real, it's Batman. Batman makes better movies and has greater stature among fans. Plus, Batman will have no problem getting the shield out of Cap's reach with some bat-trick. Batman's also just too intense for Cap to handle.

Hulk vs. Superman

Superman will destroy the Hulk. Yes, we know, Supes is not as powerful as he was back in the good old days, but we still say he could beat the crap out of the Hulk. Lets keep in mind that Superman has other powers besides just strength. Look for the Hulk to give him a true run for his money, though.

Superboy vs. Spider-Man

We would really, really love for Spider-Man to win this battle, but were gonna have to say Superboy takes it. Superboy's just got the power, yknow?

Lobo vs. Wolverine

We think this match-up is stupid. Lobo and Wolverine do not belong together, because Lobo is a strange, silly character that really belongs in his own universe. We dont even think he belongs in the DC universe. In any case, well say this is a close one but that Wolverine will win. First off, he'll win the vote because he is a more popular character. But even more important, Wolverine is not as nasty, but he is more cunning. He deserves to win.

Wonder Woman vs. Storm

We predict the winner to be Wonder Woman. Lets face it, Storm may be able to whip up a thunderstorm, but Diana can tear down a building. We picture Storm throwing her best natural disaster at Wonder Woman, without even slowing the amazon down.

The final score: Four DC heroes will win and only one Marvel hero does! Ouch, what an embarassment that would be for the big M!

READ STARSHIP ONLINE!!

Starship Online

(Because we told you so!)

not for the weak of heart
(when it comes to surfin' the net)

Starship Online

DC VERSUS MARVEL: INTERVIEW!

Vantage spoke with **DC Versus Marvel** writer Ron Marz about his work on the DC Versus Marvel project. Marz wrote the as-yet unreleased first issue of the miniseries. We pumped the guy for all of the info you want to know . . .

VANTAGE: *How were Marvel and DC able to come together with all of the industry infighting thats been going on?*

MARZ: We'll Im sure a lot of lawyers spent a lot of hours sitting around conference tables hammering out contracts. I think for the most part there's always been a willingness and a friendliness between the editorial departments at Marvel and DC. Obviously they've done a handful of crossovers in the past. It was the right time and the right place. The industry is in a little bit of a downturn. Everybody's trying to jump-start readers interest again, and I think this is a great way to do it.

VANTAGE: *So you think this will do it?*

MARZ: Ahhh . . . Ask me that in four months. I don't know, I certainly hope so. I think that this project is everything the readers could have wanted. If this doesn't excite people I don't know what will.

VANTAGE: *How did you choose which heroes would battle?*

MARZ: It was kind of a group effort. Myself, Peter David, Mike Carlin and Mark Gruenwald sat around Mark's apartment in Manhattan one afternoon and drew up the list of who was going to be battling who. That was back in May I guess. That was the first meeting. I think they invited Peter and I onto the project in April. Quite frankly, the character match-ups were pretty obvious: Who is stronger, Superman or the Hulk? Who is the more ferel or nasty guy, Wolverine or Lobo?

VANTAGE: *There wasn't a lot of debate on it? It was just pretty obvious to you guys.*

MARZ: Yeah, they were just natural match ups in terms of who the characters were. You wouldn't want to put Captain America against Superman, because he'd get trounced pretty fast. So we just wanted to go with the matchups that made sense.

Characters™ & © 1995 Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. and DC Comics

VANTAGE: *One struck as odd, Robin and Jubilee?*

MARZ: Well it's not really odd when you consider that when Jubilee was created she was kind of a Robin knock-off. Her first costume was very reminiscent of the Robin costume. So I think there was a little bit of an attempt to portray Jubilee as a Robin-type character so hopefully everybody will get a kick out of that.

VANTAGE: *Now are there any battles that are won in the first issue or is it just a set-up for the rest of the mini?*

MARZ: Its more like set up and introdcutory stuff and a lot of characters meeting

each other for the first time. A lot of eye-candy, really. The readers have been dreaming about seeing it and now we're gonna start showing them.

VANTAGE: Is this where the wall between the Marvel and DC universes is breached?

MARZ: Yeah, the wall starts to crumble and the two universes start to mesh. So you get a lot of different pairings that were never possible before — that's the real attraction of the first issue. In the second issue the battles start.

VANTAGE: Is there any concern that all or most of one side's heroes will win after the voting?

MARZ: I'm sure that the respective heads of the respective companies are probably a little concerned — nobody wants to get drubbed here. But were leaving it in the hands of the fans. For the five battle that are going to be voted on, well let the pieces fall where they may.

VANTAGE: Do you pull in Zero Hour or any of the other Marvel or DC history?

MARZ: Well, the genesis of this whole thing is that most of the Marvel and DC crossovers that have come out — certainly all of the ones in the recent past, Batman/Punishers, Spider-Man/Batman, X-Men /Teen Titans — they sort of played the universes as being one place. In other worlds, Batman could jump in the Batmobile, drive to New York City and hang out with Spider-Man. The Green Lantern/Sufer is kind of a demarkation point in that we treat the Marvel and DC universes as absolute separate entities. A big part of the Lantern/Sufer story is that there are two universes and that were crossing characters over from one universe to another, so this is a little different than a lot of these other crossovers because it's almost like an incontinuity crossover.

VANTAGE: The most fun part of this project?

MARZ: Since I have worked at both companies it wasnt like I was doing something completely new and different. I had played with some of these same toys before, but just the fact that I could play with all of them in the same place at the same time was a pure joy. It was like going into a candy store and having somebody tell you that you can have whatever you want.

CONTEST: WHO WILL WIN THE FIVE MAJOR BATTLES?

Correctly predict who will win all five major battles and we'll enter you in a drawing to win a silver-cover, limited CreeD #1! If you get all five right, but are not selected to win CreeD, you'll still get . . .

1) Our ovewhelming awe and respect
2) Your name printed in big, bold letters in Vantage, so the world can know of your greatness.

Just fill'er out and good luck . . .

Please circle one hero from each of the following contests. Circle the heroes that you think will win — if all of your heroes win, so do you! The postmark on your envelope must be by DECEMBER 31, 1995 — no exceptions!

Now make your own predictions . . .

Chose One:	Batman	Versus	Captain America
Chose One:	Hulk	Versus	Superman
Chose One:	Superboy	Versus	Spider-Man
Chose One:	Wolverine	Versus	Lobo
Chose One:	Wonder Woman	Versus	Storm

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: ( ) _____

Send to Vantage Predictions, 13000 W. Blue Mound Rd. #110, Elm Grove, WI 53122

& © 1995 Comics

HOPES AND DOUBTS FOR BROADWAY COMICS DEBUT

Broadway Comics, the new Shooter-led publishing house, is finally gettting their first few issues off the ground. **Vantage** is always excited over any new launch, but we have to admit that the art weve seen so far looks touch and go.

The most promising title may be Fatale, a bad girl title featuring a smug Rouge-type character who drains energy from her victims by touching them. Of course, her iti-biti costume is a necessity since skin contact is her weapon. The heroine is attractively drawn and the book may indeed appeal to the usual "bad girl" buying public. Retailers, however, are starting to warn of a glut in "bad girl" titles.

One retailer who read a Broadway sampler said he was disappointed in the stories. "They dont seem to be doing anything new or fresh," he said. Broadway hero Star Seed, for example, dons his cape and flies to rescue a man falling from a building. We have to admit this sounds familiar.

Broadway Vice President of Marketing Steve Schanes sees things a bit differently, "Jim Shooter has delivered products that are really solid. The foundation is very solid here." He added that Fatale would be an unusually realistic title.

Schanes also promises high-end computer coloring and a strong marketing plan, including telephone calls to the top two hundred retailers. Targeting the 16-35 year-old male, Schanes maintains a positive outlook, even in the face of Marvel Versus DC, which has many independant publishers concerned. Some publishers fear that Marvel Versus DC will diminish interest in non-mainstream titles, at least for the short term.

"Actually, its going to help," said Schanes of the four-issue mini from Marvel and DC. He compared the situation to four gas stations on a corner, saying that the crossover would only bring more fans into comic shops.

Fatale™ & © 1995 Broadway Comics

BROADWAY COMICS HIRES MARKETING GURUS

Formerly in charge of Marvels publicity department, Garry Guzzo now is in charge of media relations for Broadway Comics. Guzzo's addition to the Broadway staff hasn't been well-publicized, but it is sure to bring credability to the company among insiders. Steve Schanes also joined Broadway Comics, having worked in the indsutry as a retailer, distributor, and publisher since the earliest days of the industry.

NEW VERTIGO ONGOING SERIES

Hey, we know reading a plot synopsis can be boring, but please read this next paragraph. We think you'll agree the premise for Vertigo's **Seekers** sounds pretty interesting ...

They say a Magician spent years locked away in a cramped room writing a book: a book scrawled in an inexplicable code; a book that explains the Cosmos and Man's place in it; a book that contains truths never revealed before. But the book is lost ... Or is simply waiting, somewhere, to be found. The one who finds it holds the Key to Creation. And the one who decipers it ... holds the Power of God.

Well, there's certianly something to be said for holding the Power of God and **Vantage's** curiosity has been piqued. "I want Seekers to be a grand tale," said writer J.M. DeMattis, "well told ... brimming over with fascinating characters and provacative ideas, exotic places and exciting events."

The first issue of **Seekers**, which sounds a lot like Sandman, ships later this month. Worth a flip-through and as with any Vertigo title, worth conisdering as a pick.

PHOENIX RESURRECTION CONTINUES

Following the seven-part story of **The Phoenix Resurrection** will be two 48-page books in December. These two books are: **The Phoenix Resurrection: Genesis** and **The Phoenix Resurrection: Revelations**.

The story running through the two books will feature many popular characters from the X-Universe, among them: Wolverine, Jubilee, Best, Banshee, Storm, Bishop, and Rogue. The events in the two books will also promise to lead to changes in the Ultraverse. Hank Kanalz, editor of the project, says, "There will be some surprise character changes and at least one major new character will be born from the event—Foxfire."

Both books are written by Ian Edginton (**X-Men 2099**) with art from Bryan Hitch (**X-Men: Alpha**), Mark Pacella (**X-Force**), Randy Green (**Cable**), John Royle (**Wolverine**), Jeff Matsuda (**Savage Dragon**), Kevin West, Darick Robertson, and Rob Haynes.

The Phoenix Resurrection: Genesis and **The Phoenix Resurrection: Revelations** are scheduled for a December release.

how do dealers know what's
hot before i do?
VANTAGE
COMIC & CARD PICKS
THE MAGAZINE FOR COMIC DEALERS AND SERIOUS COLLECTORS!

Prime™ & © 1995 Malibu Comics Entertainment, Inc.

UNIVERSAL PICTURES ACQUIRES FILM RIGHTS TO PRIME

In a deal that could top $1 million, rights to Malibu Comics' best-selling title **Prime** have been acquired for producer Charles Gordon. Malibu's deal includes backend participation and control of merchandising.

The project will be based on Kevin Green, the title's 13-year old central character, who morphs into Prime. Universal was attracted to **Prime** because it believes that **Prime** will be a good basis for a family movie and has franchise potential. "I think 'Prime' will appeal to people of all ages," said Gordon. "It should certainly have the same appeal as 'Big' did. This is a good comic to bring to the big screen. It isn't too sci-fi and has the potential to reach a broad audience."

Comics have become popular in Hollywood recently and Scott Rosenberg, President of Malibu Comics, had this to say, "What's great about comics is that they are fantasy and escape that have an all-ages medium. Movies are a great way to tell a comic book story because a comic is really a storyboard of a movie." Among other comic related titles in development are: **"The Fantastic Four," "Zorro," "The X-Men,"** among several others.

John Turman, who wrote a screenplay for **The Hulk**, has signed on to write the **Prime** screenplay.

Hal Lieberman of Universal Pictures, said his studio has tremendous interest in comic book characters and is hopeful that **Prime** will follow in the successful box office footsteps of the studio's comic-turned-movie **Timecop**, which starred Jean-Claude Van Damme. Malibu also has some other titles being sought after for possible movie production, among them **Rune** and **The Nightman.**

ULTRAFORCE ON TELEVISION

October 15 marked **Ultraforce's** debut on television. The show is featured on Sundays at 9:00 a.m. in markets all across the U.S. with over 130 stations broadcasting it. The show could have a dramatic long-term affect on the demand for Prime and Ultraforce back issues.

Vantage has been predicting this for years. Finally, the day has come for Ultraforce to really start to stand on its own two feet with a television cartoon. Look for pressure on back-issues to build.

The **Ultraforce** animated show has super heroes Prime, Hardcase, and Prototype joining together to battle the evils of the Ultraverse. Some villains that will be seen include: Rune, Lord Pumpkin, and Primevil. "We just celebrated our first-year anniversary of the **Ultraforce** comic book launch, and to have a television show in place in that amount of time is phenomenal," said Scott Rosenberg, President of Malibu Comics.

To ensure the quality of the show, Malibu has put together a strong team to develop it. Several key animators from the popular series **X-Men** and **Spider-Man** have been hired, including former **X-Men** Executive Producer Joe Calamari, and Line Producer Scott Thomas.

Ultraforce™ & © Malibu Comics Entertainment, Inc.

STARSHIP ONLINE MAGAZINE • PUBLISHED BY VANTAGE • STARSHIP ONLINE MAGAZINE

Starship Online

Spider-Man™ & © 1995 Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc.

Special Sample Mimi-Issue of Starship Online Magazine!

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One Page Guide To Getting Started Quick And Easy

The Ultimate Internet Cheat Sheet!

Everything For The Beginner Crammed Into One Little Page!

1. Buy A Computer

Buy a Macintosh or an IBM compatible. Most computers are IBM compatibles (also called "PCs"). If buying a PC, Compaq and IBM are strong brands. Stay away from Packard Bell, which has had some hardware upgrade and customer service problems. Buy through a store, not mail order, so you can bring the computer back with questions if necessary. You can also have a computer built at a local no-name shop, which is about the same price and gives you the advantage of more personalized customer service and a more easily upgraded machine. The disadvantage is that you won't have IBM or Compaq to call if there's a problem.

If buying a PC, for best results online make sure it is a 486 or Pentium, with at least 8 meg of ram (12 is better), and a 14.4 modem (or a 28.8, which is better). This has nothing to do with being online, but if the software is preloaded, you want it to be Microsoft (Word, Works, Excel, etc.) , not Claris or some other brand of software. Microsoft is taking over the computer world, and if you want to be as compatible as possible with the world, that's the way to go.

2. Get Online

The easiest way for a beginner to get started is to join a commercial online service such as America Online, Compuserve, or the Microsoft Network. America Online is a little bit easier to use than Compuserve, and it seems to have more kids and families as members. It starts out at $10 a month. It costs more if you use it a lot. Compuserve has more adults, and it is better for business. It starts out at $10 a month too, but it can get very expensive if you chose to use some of their pay-as-you-go services. Microsoft Network is a brand new commercial online service that will grow very quickly since it is sponsored by Microsoft, which again, is taking over the world.

To join America Online, go to a book store or supermarket and buy a computer magazine with the America Online disk in it. Follow the instructions on the disk. Or call America Online at 1-800-827-6364. For Compuserve you may also be able to find a disk in the same way, or just call 1-800-557-9614. Other online services: Prodigy (1-800-PRODIGY) and Delphi (1-800-695-4005). If you recently purchased a computer, you will probably be able to bypass phone calls and disks — there should be an icon you can click on to join Microsoft Network or even America Online, Compuserve, or another service.

An alternative to the commercial online services described above are the services that offer direct Internet access. You can sign up with one in your area for around $25 per month. In contrast to the national commercial online services described above, when you get direct Internet access you'll want a local service to save money. Check in the yellow pages or ask at the computer store for the name of a reliable company. You'll want an Internet service that offers e-mail and Netscape (the best software for accessing the Web, which unfortunately is not offered by most commercial online services).

3. Getting Started Online

Online virgins seem to get the most out of live chat. You get to talk with people live from all over the country. People seem to enjoy the mystery of talking to strangers that you can't see, coupled with the idea that you can say anything without consequences. Go there first to experiment. In America Online, live chat is called "people talk". In Compuserve its called "communicate". Some services will refer to it as "IRC".

4. Getting to Comics and Sci Fi Online

To get to the comics section in Compuserve, click the picture of the traffic light. Type in "comics" or "compub". To get to the science fiction and comics section in America Online, click on "Go To"and then "Keyword." Type in "Science Fiction." To get to comics, keep clicking on stuff with the word "comic" in it.

5. What Is The Internet, The World Wide Web And The Information Superhighway?

Getting online is not the same as getting on the Internet. When you join a commercial service, you are online because you are using your modem to access ONLY the information provided by that service. The Internet is the whole big world of modem-connected computers that lies beyond your service. You can get to the Internet from most commercial online services, including America Online, Compuserve, and Prodigy. The Internet used to be just text, but now you can see the Internet with pictures, graphics and more — that's called the World Wide Web. Its thought of as a "Web" because the Internet is really just a giant web of computers connected to each other by colorful buttons on your screen that you can click on with your mouse.

The Web is exciting because it is the harbinger of the future. In just a few years, your television set and computer will be the same box. Imagine that your TV remote will have a roller-ball on it that can be used like a mouse. You'll be able to move your little arrow around on the television screen. You'll click on-screen buttons to change to one of hundreds of channels, order any movie at any time, to order pizza, to read articles from the library, to video-phone your friend, and much more. The World Wide Web is an infantile prelude to this coming Information Superhighway, which will have unfathomable consequences in the realms of business, entertainment, social interaction, and so forth. Cable companies, baby bells, and long distance carriers are already spending millions of dollars on research, development, and congressional lobbying to bring the Information Superhighway into our homes and businesses within years, not decades.

6. How To Get Into The Internet's World Wide Web

On America Online go to the main menu and hit "Internet Connection" for instructions. Compuserve software now comes with separate World Wide Web software. In your Compuserve folder, click on "SpryMosaic." If you don't have that icon in your folder, you have an older version of Compuserve and you will need to download the software from Compuserve.

You can also get better and cheaper (if you use it a lot) Web access through a non-commercial service that makes use of Netscape (see point #2, above).

TOP ONLINE PICKS OF THE MONTH

The X-Men Dangler's FAQ (The Internet's World Wide Web)
What Was Zero Hour? (America Online)
Writing and Drawing Library (Compuserve)

MORE ONLINE PICKS

Dreamwatch Online (The Internet's World Wide Web)
Submitting To DC? (America Online)
The Cerebus Home Page (The Internet's World Wide Web)
The Uncanny X-Page (The Internet's World Wide Web)

Welcome to the Starship Online insert to Vantage #16! The purpose of these pages is to give you an idea of what Starship Online Magazine will be like! It will be a new hard copy magazine for comics and sci fans who surf the net! Look for the first issue in late January!

CONTENTS

One Page Guide To Getting Started Quick And Easy
Even if you've never owned a computer our one page guide will quickly and easily get you started with your modem. Whatever your level of expertise, jump into our one page guide wherever it's right for you!

Picks And Contents
Well, here you are, reading about where you are reading. Now there's something to talk about.

Comics And Sci Fi News
The latest inside news from the Internet and the non-net world of comics too!

Starship Online Picks
In the great tradition of Vantage, we bring you the coolest, most graphic, most interesting and fun online and Internet areas out there!

The Adventures of Online Boy
Rich Keller takes a month off from Reading Picks to give you a taste of this exciting new Starship Online column.

Comics On The Net!

Starship Online

Shipping January 1996

STARSHIP ONLINE MAGAZINE • PUBLISHED BY VANTAGE • STARSHIP ONLINE MAGAZINE

Comics And Sci Fi News

DC COMICS ONLINE PUSHES MARVEL/DC CROSSOVER

As the countdown towards the biggest cross-company crossover in history continues, DC Comics has planned an unprecedented promotional effort in the brave new world of Cyberspace.

DC Comics Online is DC's area on America Online — it will be the electronic center for a host of contests, events, and excerpts from the miniseries.

To begin with, the auditorium will welcome not only penciller Dan Jurgens (December 14 at 9:00 pm EST), writer Ron Marz (December 19 at 7:00 pm EST), but also editors Mike Carlin (February 8 at 7:00 pm EST) and Mark Gruenwald (January 4 at 7:00 pm EST).

But creator appearances won't be the only events in the auditorium. Fans eager for the chance to argue the merits of their favorite heroes, DC or Marvel, can start sending in their entries in the Great Debate contest. To enter, online readers must submit a brief essay on why they think a particular character would win the fight he or she is scheduled to have in the miniseries.

DC will pick one winner for each hero, and through January and February each winner will defend their position live in the America Online auditorium against the person representing the opposing hero! What a battle that could be! The debates will take place on January 11 and 18, and also February 1, 8, and 15.

DC Online will also be a balloting center for readers to vote on the final outcome of the big five contests in the miniseries crossover. Ballots in stores will have e-mail addresses printed on them — one for each hero. Just send e-mail to the addresses of your favorites to vote. Whichever heroes get the most votes online and elsewhere will win in the DC Versus Marvel / Marvel Versus DC miniseries.

Also, there'll be weekly chat on the crossover that's hosted by a DC or Marvel editor every Wednesday at 6PM.

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STARSHIP ONLINE PICKS

Dreamwatch Online

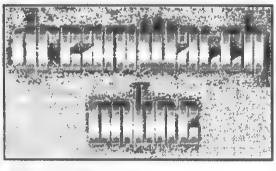
http://www.pavilion.co.uk./UniversalFlavour/Dreamwatch/

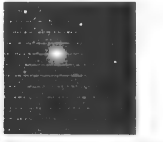
One of our biggest complaints about web sites is that all they are is a bunch of links to other "cool" web sites. But where's the beef? Dreamwatch Online is largely guilty as charged, with lots of links, but not a lot of interactivity. But as far such annoyingly amorphous web sites go, this one's palletable. The opening graphic is fun, and the links are pretty invaluable.

Press on the Dreamwatch Online logo and you'll be instantly transported (or for those of you with a lower baud, eventually transported) to the latest issue of the magazine. Or at least that's what they call it. Where this issue was, we had no idea at first, since you first must scroll past the requisite promotional stuff.

In keeping with the current trend of companies desperately trying to find some way to make money off the net (with often mixed results), Dreamwatch hits you with a barrage of offers to sponsor their page, plus promotion of their UK sci fi mag (called Dreamwatch). You can of course subscribe to Dreamwatch too — the thing costs 2.2 Pounds per issue, whatever that comes to (yes, this sentence written by a brainless ethnocentric American). Or you can just read it online for free, thus presenting the growing magazine-Internet problem that we face as well: print your articles for free on the Internet or not?

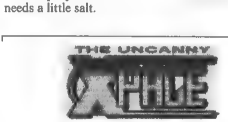
One neat part of the site is the free classified ad you can place. Up to 25 five words are yours for the taking, free of charge. Sell your cat, buy a spaceship, or offer to trade your Rai #0 for a paper clip. Of course, if some UK person responds, watch out for those shipping charges.





Click on the Dreamwatch Online Sci-Fi Resource database for a strong list of links. Not just your standard X-Files and Star Wars stuff, this thing's also got Power Rangers (yech), Dark Shadows, and other forgotten topics. No MST3K or comic stuff though.

Stop by for an all-around delicious site that needs a little salt.



X-Page Of The Week:
X-Men Superheroes

New And Improved -- Sights And Sounds -- Welcome To Xbooks

FAQ's and Files -- X-Men Lists -- Stories and Fan Fiction

Comics Newsgroups -- Mailing Lists -- X-Men Simulations

Other X-Men Pages -- Other Comics Pages

Welcome to the co-official home page for
me.marvel.xbooks, your source for everything you ever wanted to know about the X-Men on the Internet. If you're new to the Net, then by all means, Welcome to Xbooks! Come catch a dose of xbooks culture and find out what we're all about. Returning visitors should see what's New And Improved in the last week or two.

If you have any comments about the X-Page, or have a suggestion for a new entry or X-Page Of The Week, feel free to e-mail me at m-blase@students.uiuc.edu. And don't forget to take a look at my own home page while you're

The Uncanny X-Page

http://www.students.uiuc.edu/~m-blase/x-page.html

Keeping in mind that comics' presence on the net is mostly made up of fans, not firms, this is a very strong page. The opening graphic is this really neat logo. The X-Men logo is altered to read, "X-Page," and by god it looks as good as if Marvel had done it.

The X-Page offers links to sights and sounds, stories and fan fiction, mailing lists, and other X-pages. The Uncanny X-Page does say that it is not affiliated with Marvel and that everything is used without permission.

The most amusing link is to the Summers family tree (which you can get to directly at http://icarus.cc.uic.edu/~bmeyer1/summers-tree.80-col). As the X-Page says, it is a "more than complete" genealogy of the Summers clan, including alternate timelines and possible futures revealed to date.

The tree is quite a sight. It is big. Really, really big.

What is it that makes the X-Men so popular? Herein lies part of the answer — the thing is a giant

soap opera. That's right, ten monthly titles of superheroes falling in love, having each other's children, and not being able to have each other — it's a darn soap, and the Summers family tree proves it.

One even more interesting link is to the X-Men Danglers FAQ . . .

The X-Men Danglers FAQ

http//www.students.uiuc.edu/~m-blase/texts/danglersFAQ/part2.txt

This is a pretty fascinating list of X-Men plot lines that have actually been resolved. It was Chris Claremont who first established that a completed X-plot line is a bad plot line, and later X-writers have picked up the baton. But sometimes an X-plot really does get resolved.

Just a few of the questions that have been answered . . .

What is Magneto's real name?

"Erik Magnus Lehnsherr, according to X-Men Unlimited #2."

Is Sabertooth related to Wolverine?

"No. They took a blood test in Wolverine #42. This was the original plot intended to link the two characters, which was dumped when Wolverine was extremely popular and Sabertooth was a nobody, on the grounds that it would look silly. Previous references to it were explained away as memory implants in the Wolverine title."

How did Lorna Dane know how to telephone the X-Men's base in Australia?

"According to Chris Claremont, she actually called the X-Men's mansion in Westchester. The computers there forwarded the call. This contradicts Damage Control #4, however, in which the power supply was shut down."

Hints of romance between Snowbird and Wolverine?

"Well, she's dead, so its a mute point."

And some amusing yet-to-be answered, perhaps never-to-be answered plot threads . . .

X-Men #200: What happened off-panel in Paris?

X-Men #234: What happened to the two Brood left alive in Denver?

X-Men #238: Wolverine refers to being a slave. What is he talking about?

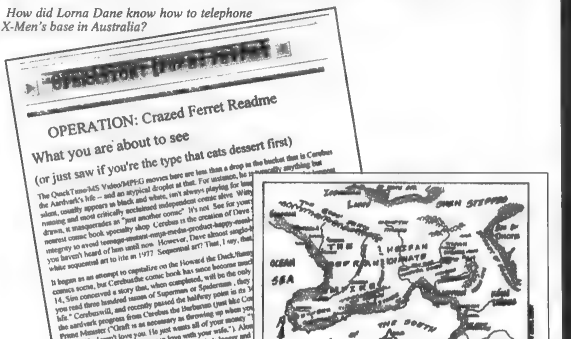
X-Men #252: How is it that the X-Men's computer appears to be alive?

X-Men #171: What is Rogue's real name?

The Cerebus Home Page (The Crazed Ferret)

http://www.digimark.net/wraith/Cerebus/ferret-readme.html

This appears to be the Cerebus Home Page. It is called Operation: Crazed Ferret. Cerebus is not a ferret, he's an aardvark. He could pass for a ferret,


OPERATION: Crazed Ferret Readme
What you are about to see
(or just saw if you're the type that eats dessert first)
What next?
Return to Crazed Ferret home
Return to Comix page
Phone Homey the Page!
last revised 6.25.95

Get a life, we're sick of hearing you whine!

though, so we'll live with it.

As the page says, Cerebus is the longest running and most critically acclaimed independent comic alive. Witty, literate, and exquisitely drawn, it masquerades as "just another comic." It is not.

The hard copy comic is about an aardvark, but its not a funny-book. Rather, it deals with mature themes in a medieval setting. Our favorite Cerebus storyline is Church and State where Cerebus runs for office. Dave Sim has his aardvark making backroom deals for votes and giving speeches to dimwitted voters. Sim is obviously politically savvy, giving us a true taste of real, cynical politics.

We lost interest in Cerebus years ago when the letters pages (up to ten pages!) started to take over the book. You don't get very much story per +$2 issue, but what you do get is pretty much the best that's out there.

Sim is one of the most outspoken people working in comics. He has a history of standing up for creator-rights. "No corporation will ever pay a creator enough money to sue them successfully," says Sim.

We've always wondered who the mysterious background artist Gehard is. The man doesn't even have a last (or first) name, but he's been competently assisting Dave since the beginning of time. So it was with delight that we noticed a Gehard link . . . which goes nowhere. Heavy sigh . . . the mystery continues.

The site is anemic but spirited, with Quicktime movies that morphs Dave Sim into Gehard and back. (At least we can see the mysterious Gehard!) Plus, there are a few Cerebus movies as well. For a better taste of Cerebus than this site could possibly offer, we suggest one of the phone book-sized reprint editions.

Submitting to DC?

On America Online, pull down "Go To" from menu, pick Keyword, type in DC Comics, chose Message Board, chose List Categories, chooses DC Comics II Message Board, chose Submitting to DC?

This is a great place to go for those of you interested in writing or drawing comics. Its also a great place to complain about DC's failure to hire you. "Getting published by DC is next to impossible," says one poster, "even if you know somebody. I'm sure this isn't true for everyone but the comics business is a tough one to crack." Another writer (aarghh@aol.com) agrees, "I too have been trying for over three years to submit comic outlines to the "Big Three" and I have come out of it feeling a little dazed and punchy."

The truth is that comic sales are down from a few years ago and it is now even harder to break in than before. Writers are having an especially tough time, since many top artists are getting writing assignments now. But the road is not impossible.

spitphyr@aol.com suggests sending three pages of continuous story to a company, using their characters. Send it again and again, frequently. We know one artist who sent a full book into DC Comics every month, unsolicited, until he finally got a penciling job.

This area is instructive and helpful, and a great place to commiserate, but in spite of the DC sponsorship, DC does not appear to be monitoring it.

What Was Zero Hour?

On America Online, pull down "Go To" from menu, pick Keyword, type in DC Comics, chose Message Board, chose List Categories, chooses DC Comics II Message Board, chose Talk to Dan Jurgens, chose What Was Zero Hour?, chose List Responses

"Excuse me, I'm a little confused," writes jrobe7962?@aol.com on a DC Comics message board, "I read all the Zero Hour issues and the crossovers and still have no idea what Zero Hour was." We thought this was sort of funny. Not everyone agreed. In fact, reaction turned OJ-like, and even a pro got into the act . . .

Dan Jurgens (Zero Draw@aol.com), writer of Zero Hour, responded, "Sorry, but I think the story is quite self-explanatory."

We also thought the story was confusing at certain points. The ensuing online battle got a little bloody as people rushed to defend Jurgens and Zero Hour. At one point, one combatant screams, "GET A LIFE. WE'RE SICK OF HEARING YOU WHINE."

For a blood and guts romp that even our Editor Rob Golub has now entered, What Was Zero Hour? is pretty . . . well . . different.

Writing And Drawing Library

On Compuserve click on picture of traffic light, type comics, choose the picture of a hand pointing at books, choose writing an drawing.

This is a great resource for aspiring comic book creators. Right off the bat, you can download the actual scrpits to comic books, including Marvels. There is no better training for learning to write comics than reading actual scripts. Other resources include advisory articles and sample art pieces. Many downloadables are from beginners looking for feedback. This area is highly recommended for anyone interested in becoming a comics creator.

Sell your cat, buy a spaceship, or offer to trade your Rai #1 for a paper clip.

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THE ADVENTURES OF ONLINE BOY

By Rich Keller
hyperstat@aol.com

I can't believe I'm doing this . . .stupid article. . I'm a superhero for Gosh sake . . .why do I have to subject myself to this sh- . . .What? You mean we're live right now? Howcum you didn't tell me? Why I oughta . . .

Ahem. Well, um, hello there and welcome to the first in what will hopefully be years of online information and residual checks. Yes, it is I, Online Boy, partner and sidekick extraordinare to the greatest superhero of all. Of course I'm talking about Rob Golub Man. What do you mean you've never heard of us? Who do you think takes over when Batman and Robin leave Gotham City. Well, actually no one because they live in a comic book world. But, hey, we've asked the executives at DC comics to write us into an issue or two. All they ever do is laugh at us and hang up. Man, no respect I tell you.

Anyway, while I'm not patrolling the streets of the megalopolis of Wisconsin, I spend my time jumping through the bulletin boards and forums of many of the online services. In fact I spend most of my time online; hence the reason that I haven't had a date in over two years, but I digress. So, Rob Golub Man politely asked me (forced it on me at gunpoint) if I would write a feature about some of the comic, science fiction, and fantasy forums you can find on services like America Online, Compuserve and Prodigy.

Of course I said yes (after he said he would hold his breath until I did say it) and here I am. I've decided to start this column off with a little information about the leader of the online services at this time: America Online (until the Fox network of online services, the Microsoft Network, rolls over it). So without further ado . . .

America Online

Just to give you some background on how big the online service industry has grown — two years ago this service boasted only 350,000 members. Now, after being around for a decade, it boasts somewhere in the area of 3.5 million. Not too shabby. As of right this very second AOL is the leader in interactive services.

In my opinion it has every right to boast about its lofty position (Well, not really. I'm just hoping to get a free membership from AOL President Steve Case). The service has everything you would want an online service to have. On top of hundreds of forum topics and chat rooms, AOL (as American Online is often referred to) also offers unlimited e-mail, an Internet gateway (which also has unlimited e-mail), and a connection to the hottest thing since the Atari 2600: the World Wide Web. All areas are very colorful and full of graphics that are easy to navigate through (except the Internet, which has always been confusing to traverse). By using AOL's navigating tool, KEYWORD, you can jump from the Cartoon Network to today's New York Times in mere seconds.

If you're worried about youngsters not being able to find anything to do online then be rest assured that AOL has everything for everyone. In fact, they have a whole section devoted to children (Kids Connection) as well as forums such as Advanced Dungeons & Dragons, DC Comics, Star Trek, and tons more. If you're concerned that said child will enter one of the Male Bondage chat rooms you can set up a number of Parental Controls that will lock out those areas.

Mind you, not everything is wine and roses with AOL. As with any big business they have quite a few problems. For example, unless you have a modem that works with faster-than-light speeds (or in the real world anything under 144000 bps) you could miss Friends while you try to download the latest upgrade or the new artwork for MTV Online. The download could also hike up your phone bill if AOL doesn't have a local number for you to dial out on (such is the problem for your valiant author). And once you do get that local number you may have to wait because everyone else in your vicinity who has an online service will be dialing into it as well. And by the time it's free the service may be down for repairs.

OK, OK I admit it. That last paragraph was me venting about all the problems I've encountered in the last few months, but it felt really good. And in defense of Mr. Case and all of the employees at AOL they do try to correct problems as quickly as possible as well as keep members abreast of any interruptions that may occur in their service. They even have an extensive online support staff that really helps out when your totally stumped. Of course that only works IF you can get online. OK, OK I'm sorry. That one just slipped out.

Have I forgotten anything? Oh yeah, the price of joining AOL. It's FREE! Free like the gas in your car, the food in your refrigerator, the shoes on your fre- What? Those aren't free? No wonder the cashier was yelling at me when I walked out the door. I thought she was just happy to see me.

In all seriousness AOL is next to being free. For $9.95 a month you receive unlimited access to all of the areas in the AOL universe. In addition, each month you receive five free hours of service. After the initial 300 minutes are up you'll be charged an additional $2.50 an hour. If you're like me (and unless you have super-strength you're not) the most money you spend will be when you first join the service. Then after you look at your first month's bill and have a heart attack you'll be inclined to use the service a little more conservatively. Hey, trust me on this. Would a superhero lie to you?

The World Wide Web is to the Internet what Windows is to DOS: An easy way to run a confusing system backbone.

BIG CHANGES IN STORE FOR STORMWATCH

In **StormWatch** #25, a powerful madman by the name of Despot was introduced. In **StormWatch** #27, the powerful Despot finally meets his match, although it costs several members their lives, including Spartan.

Issues 28 and 29 take the book in an entirely new direction. In 28, a brand-new team is introduced, based on characters created by Jeff Marriotte and designed by Jim Lee. In the same issue, a team of non-powered heroes, known as **StormForce**, make their debut.

In issue 30, the surviving members of the original **StormWatch** return and in issue 31 they get new uniforms. And for the early part of 1996, **StormWatch** and **StormForce** will be featured in a four-issue miniseries leading up to WildStorm's summer event. "Fans who want to keep up with events unfolding in the wonderful world of WildStorm comics are encouraged not to miss an issue of this integral title," says Jeff Marriotte, writer and Marketing Director. "**StormWatch** is definitely where things are happening."

Stormwatch™ & © 1996 Angel Entertainment, Inc. dba Wildstorm Productions

GRIFTER AND SHI TEAM UP TO SAVE A CITY

When terrorists target one of Japan's major cities for destruction, WildStorm's gunslinger Grifter and Billy Tucci's "bad girl" Shi team up to stop them.

The team up of these two exciting characters is heightened by the fact that the three artists working on it are some of the hottest in comics today, namely: Jim Lee, Bill Tucci, and Travis Charest. The book is a 64-page hardcover with two different dust covers, one by Lee and one by Tucci and is offered at $29.95. As for the artist team-up, Jim Lee has this to say: "I'm a big fan of Billy's work. When the opportunity to do this project came up, I jumped at the chance. This will be a high-quality oversized book; a keepsake that I'd want to own, even if I wasn't involved in it."

Grifter/Shi is scheduled for release in December.

MALIBU CLAIMS SUCCESS

"I am pleased to announce our first line-wide sell-out," said Malibu Comics President Scott Rosenberg of the $1.50 infinity comics. Malibu claims that their $1.50 cover price gamble paid off. "We are excited to hear that the fans are responding to our new storylines," said Rosenberg.

MALIBU TO LAUNCH NEW TITLE

Foxfire, introduced in the aftermath of the Phoenix Resurection, gets her own Ultraverse title in Feburary, **Vantage** has learned. The Foxfire series will be ongoing.

HELLBLADE JOINS THE EXILES

Hellblade, a new character who made his debut in the back of all of the Ultraverse titles, will be joining the **Exiles** as of issue #2.

Hellblade *was* dead. As a result of Black September, he was raised from the dead and has been given a chance to redeem himself.

To do this, Hellblade decides to take down the most notorious terrorists of all - The Exiles. As Hellblade stalks The Exiles, things change and he ends up becoming a member of the team. As a result, he finds that by joining the team, he has found a way to redeem himself.

The All New Exiles #2 is due out in November.

Shi™ & © 1996 William Elliot Tucci

ROB LIEFELD RETURNS TO X-FORCE

Commemerating the 50th issue of X-Force, former X-Force writer/artist Rob Liefeld has drawn a special double gatefold cover for the team he created.

"Bob Harras and I spoke at the San Diego Comicon about the possibility of doing a cover for the fiftieth issue and I jumped at the chance. Its been a long time since I've drawn Cable and co and it was a pleasure to work with Bob again," said Liefeld.

The cover will be unusual for Marvel in yet another way — it will be a variant edition!

X-Force™ & © 1995 Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc.

GEN 13 GOES TO THE MAXX

The members of **Gen13** meet **The Maxx** in **Gen13/Maxx**.

Written by **Maxx** scribe Bill Messner-Loebs, the storyline concerns missing children, kidnapped by Mr. Gone as part of a sinister plot. In the process, the **Gen13** kids get involved and as the story unfolds, there will be some surprising revelations about one of them.

Gen13/Maxx is a one-shot title due out in December.

The Maxx™ & © 1995 Sam Kieth

Spider-Man™ & © 1995 Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc

SENSATIONAL SPIDER-MAN

Marvel calls **Sensational Spider-Man** #1 the "first" issue in a recent edition of **Mega Marvel.** Sorry Charlie, #0 was the first issue. Still, #1 is important as an early issue from this new ongoing Dan Jurgens Spider-series. At just two bucks, it qualifies as a strong long-term pick.

Captain America™ & © 1995 Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc.

CAP LOOKS GOOD

Captain America continues to show promise with Mark Waid at the helm. Look for the oversized rebirth issue, **Captain America** #448.

CREED HITS WITH SUCCESS

The new, color, all-original **CreeD** #2 came out last month and flew off the racks. With Image-style computer coloring and what could be Trent Kaniugas best artwork ever, the book was better than even **Vantage** had hoped.

CreeD is the new title from Lighting Comics that **Vantage** spotlighted as a Top Pick of the Month so many moons ago. Months after we called it, some other mag picked up the ball and started to run with **CreeD.** (We forget the name of that mag —it was something like Magic User, Necromancer, Sorcerer or Warlock. Well, it wasn't a fan or a hero, we'll tell you that much.)

Boy, it sure is fun to be right.

MOEBIUS TO DEBUT FROM CALIBUR

Beginning in Spring 1996, a new series debuts from one of the great comics creators of our time, Moebius. The series is called Moebius Comics (what else needs to be said?).

The series will feature short stories, individual art pieces, and so forth. Some of it will be reprint material, but much of it will be stuff that's never been seen before! Moebius is the highly-respected French artist known for his prolific work on everything from science fiction projects, to non-comic "real art" projects, to work on Marvel's Silver Surfer.

RUNE TAKES ON VENOM

After having been sent to the Negative Zone in the **Curse of Rune** mini-series, Rune emerges from it and finds himself trapped in the Marvel Universe. Not only trapped, but soon coming face to face with Venom in **Rune Versus Venom #1**.

Rune Versus Venom #1 is written by Chris Ulm, co-creator of Rune, and art is provided by artists Greg Luzniak, Mark Pacella, and Gabriel Gecko. According to Roland Mann, editor of the book, "This cool story changes Rune in a permanent way you could never imagine."

Rune Versus Venom is a 48-page special scheduled for December release.

ONE SHOT PRESS TRIES TO HELP

Independant Publisher One Shot Press is launching a new title, **Strictly Independant! The Independent Comic Network.** The title is designed to bring exposure to small publishers.

Publishers buy in at the rate of $95.00 for the first page and $75.00 for each following page. For more information, send a SASE to One Shot Press, POB 474, Stafford Springs, CT 06076.

CREED MOONS READERS IN VARIANT

No kidding. Were serious. In a variant edition of **CreeD #2**, the main character moons readers. This is the central graphic.

The variant will be available for ordering separately. With **CreeD's** recent growing celebrety status in the industry, this book could do quite nicely. Due out soon, with a $3.00 cover price.

FEM 5 IS ENTITY'S ANSWER TO GEN 13

Entity bills **Fem 5** as the hottest and funniest team book since **Gen 13.** Four sexy super-powered girls on the run in space are introduced in **Fem 5** #1, shipping in January. **Fem 5** ships with four variant covers — one Manga, one Miller-style, one like a movie poster, and one by a mystery artist.

Entity sources have big hopes for **Fem 5.** "It's got a winning combination of action-packed story, jaw-dropping art, and colors that'll make your mouth water," said Publisher Don Chin. The series is written and drawn by Shelby Robertson, hot off drawing Crypt and Badrock for Image Comics.

In other Entity news, the company is negotiating to create a Metal Militia film, and look for a Nira X crossover with Cyndel of Imortal Studios.

Artwork™ & © 1995 Shelby Wayne Robertson

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NON-SPORTS PICKS

Vantage Card Picks

The Maxx
Marvel versus DC Rivals
Chase Cards

The Price of Inflation And A Warning To All

There was a time when customers could come in and easily pick up a box or two of cards — the high price of cards is putting an end to that. Consumers are being forced to make decisions on which sets to collect even though card companies are sending record numbers of card sets into the stores. Unless retailers adjust their orders downward to reflect the lower potential sales that can be expected, most of the cards due to ship in the next few months will have no chance to appreciate in value or demand. Of course, retailers may then overreact and under-order some important sets, but **Vantage** doesn't expect that to happen until early next Spring — stay tuned for the latest buzz.

Collectible to the Maxx

A quick glance at the comics that emerged from Image leaves little doubt that one of them clearly was Different — the Maxx. This quirky title shipped when Sam Keith finished a book rather than on any pre-determined basis, and it attracted little attention other than from a devoted following.

Then MTV aired the cartoon series based on the comic, and things were truly Different — demand soared.

There has already been one set of Maxx cards, but unless you were extremely lucky it is unlikely you will ever see anything but the promo chase card that was distributed in Wizard. A second card series is set for release in December, and **Vantage** expects a lot more demand this time around.

The card set is not chromium (drat!), but fans of the show will probably be happier with the lower price tag these cards carry than most current releases — "only" about $2 a pack (for eight cards). It is likely that the large number of casual fans will make selling sets much easier than normal, which should leave dealers with ample chase cards to sell to the completists (there are two nine-card chase sets).

The Battle of the Century

Say what you will about it, the upcoming Marvel versus DC comics are potentially one of the most critical events to hit the comics industry. (Note we said critical and not important — a few missteps could put several hundred more comic stores out of business!) There will be two card sets shipping, one this month from SkyBox and once in three months from Fleer. **Vantage** is concerned that SkyBox, even though it is now part of Marvel/Fleer, will continue its past record of massively overprinting the cards and marketing cheaper/smaller boxes with exclusive chase cards through retail stores instead of comic stores — you've been warned!

The Maxx™ & © 1995 Sam Kieth

The card set itself is mercifully small at 100 cards, but this may actually turn out to be TOO small! The chase card sets are what will drive these cards, and the three of them are massive: an eighteen-card set of Impact (embossed) cards by Julie Bell and Boris Vallejo, a twelve card Holo F/X card set, and two Mirage (lenticular holograma) cards. It will take two boxes to complete the first set, four boxes to complete the second set, and an absurd twenty boxes to complete the third. Assuming that most people drop out after the second set, dealers will have to unload nine extra sets to supply one customer with a complete set of the chases — not a likely scenario. While people may be more inclined to keep buying packs in hopes of hitting the big chase card, a quick glimpse at the current price of the Marvel Series IV cards SkyBox printed (with a highly-sought-after hologram of Spider-Man versus Venom) isn't too cheering: $12-$15 a box will buy you all you want.

Unless the cards are limited and sell-out quickly, your money would probably be better spent on extra chase cards rather than extra boxes.

Each pack will contain a ballot for the five final battles, but since comic stores will already have plenty of ballots these may turn out to be more of a nuisance than anything else.

The Art Show

FPG is relying on sequels and reruns this month. Jeffrey Jones II cards will feature a second set of fantasy cards, including 29 new pictures done especially for the card set (at least this time the set has metallic storm chases instead of the holograms his first set featured).

Of slightly more interest is Joe Jusko's Edgar Rice Burroughs Colossal Cards. These frame-size cards are about 6" by 10", and feature blown-up versions of the cards from his earlier sets. Most important: at least one autographed card will be in every box, and dealers can probably sell this one card for as much as the entire box costs them.

Artwork™ & © 1995 FPG

Avengelyne™ & © 1995 Rob Liefeld Inc. and Lissa Wolf Productions

Bad Girls Battle On

Does the world need another set of bad girl cards? **Vantage** doesn't think so, but the comic industry is convinced we do! Topps is releasing the Vampirella Gallery cards, a set of 72 oversize cards. The Mystery Walk has put many readers to sleep, and the gloss seems to be off the Vampirella fan movement, so **Vantage** is a little bit leery of this release. The chase cards should be in fairly high demand initially, especially the Vampirella hologram (**Vantage** hopes this is more of a modern 3-D hologram than a 1980s-style hologram — we'll all have to wait and see).

A marginally better bet is the Avengelyne Chromium cards from Maximum Press and WildStorm. It's the first set for the earthbound angel, and ironically the set will contain photo cards of Cathy Christian, the model who wore the Vampirella costume for the last set of Vampirella cards. The cards will be pricey (as much as $3.50 a pack for seven cards), and **Vantage** expects a lot of price resistance at that level.

A nearly-related set is the Evil Ernie II Chromium Factory set. This contains the original glow-

Artwork from Jeffrey Jones Fantasy Art cards and Joe Jusko ERB Colossal cards

in-the-dark cards from his second set, dressed up in holofoils. The inclusion of holochromed versions of the five chase cards and one additional chase card may help slightly, but the market for Ernie's card set is clearly soft, and the high price tag on this set may limit its marketability.

Nobody Home

The surprise this month is the lack of card product from two major non-sports suppliers, Comic Images and Fleer. There is a Keepsake set from CI that includes six previously-unpublished pieces of frame-size art from Frazetta in The Wonder Years Keepsake Collection, but otherwise no new issues from the company.

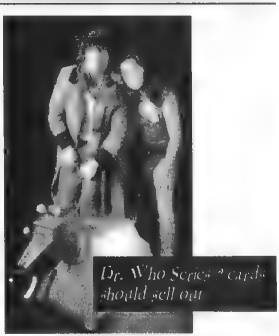
Fleer seems to have its hands full with the first Overpower expansion set, Powersurge. This set will feature an additional 200 cards for the popular collectible card game including 21 new characters (Scarlet Spider, Ghost Rider, and hordes of villains). More importantly, Fleer has not announced any plans to reprint the original starter or booster cards — if you enjoy cornering the market, you might keep an eye on the available supply of the original cards, because new players will want starter decks that won't be available from Fleer anymore.

Speculative Corner

Ever heard of Dragon Ball Z? It's a cartoon that has played all over the world, but is just now making it's way to American television. There is already a cult following for these cartoons, but there has never been anything for them to collect that dealers would really take note of. If this card set can be connected to the fans of the show, a surprise sell-through and high demand could result for those lucky enough to have the cards.

Quick Notes

Authentix continues its comic strip card set offerings with the Wizard of Id cards. Is it just Vantage? We've never even seen any of the cards put out by Authentix, and no customer has ever asked for them, but surely somebody out there must be buying and selling the cards because they keep soliciting more!



Dr. Who Series 3 cards should sell out

The first Star Wars metal card set saw 49,900 sets printed and they are still available for a price that closely resembles dealer cost. The second set had a print run of 19,900 and it was still too many. So now Metallic Images is releasing the third set, and guess what? Instead of reducing the print run they've increased it back up to 49,900. Clearly only for die-hard collectors — don't buy one until you see a significant discount offered!

30 Years of Star Trek is the first of three sets from SkyBox that will feature pictures from all the incarnations of the show and all its progeny. Not much information is available about the set, but there will be a SkyMotion redemption card so keep you fingers crossed when you open packs.

Cornerstone Communications continues to bring out niche cards. The Dr. Who Series 3 cards can be expected to sell to the same customers who bought the first two sets — and every set so far is completely sold out (so don't expect to find cheap boxes later on!). Monty Python and the Holy Grail Very Wide Cards are probably just what we expect — and the biggest chase card is the rare Holy Grail Card (don't expect to see one in your lifetime unless you are extremely lucky or very rich).

There's a new Bond film starring a new Bond, and a new company is producing a card set to go with it! Graffiti's first release will be the Goldeneye Cards, timed to show up when the movie is hits the big screen. Previous cards for Mr. Bond were an extreme disappointment due to low production values, so it is likely most dealers won't order much in the way of new Bond cards. If any kind of demand develops, it will likely be for the chase cards, so it might pay to take a look at these cards as soon as they hit the streets.

Most of the cards due to ship the next few months will have no chance to appreciate in value

by greg keefer

The fall rush has begun as toy companies switch into high gear to get those toys out by Christmas. Hang on to your wallets, it's going to be a bumpy ride!

Several new lines are starting up with some great offerings based on Saturday morning TV. Reboot, the computer generated smash has it's own line of figures from Irwin and they are very nice. The sculpting perfectly captures the look of the popular characters and more than makes up for the lack of fancy action features. Hexidecimal is totally insane looking and is packed one per case making her a hard figure to track down.

Another TV tie-in is the hilarious Earthworm Jim line from Playmates. Wacky looking figures with wierd action features. In the Playmates tradition the figures are individually numbered and meticulously detailed. Watch for early release variants in this line as Playmates has a long history of running changes in new lines. Princess Whatshername is the short pack in the first series.

Another new line that is really an old friend in new clothes is the amazing Star Wars line from Kenner. These figures are extremely hot and demand should be huge for Christmas with USA and Sci Fi channel rerunning the movies and the media blitz for the video rerelease. Early releases have been erratic and frustrating. The first cases were minus C3PO and Princess Leia. Second release cases included the Leia figure at 2 per case but no Threepio. The full assortment should be available by the time you read this but watch for Threepio to be hard to find as collectors gobble them up to complete their sets. The Leia figure will likely be cut back to one per case when Threepio is added, as she is not pictured on the card backs.

The new X-Men assortment with Iceman 2 and Archangel 2 is in stores now and HOT. Archangel and Iceman lead the pack in popularity, packing out at 4 per case each they still sell out quickly. The one female figure in the assortment, Spiral is shortpacked only 2 per case and extremely hard to find. The long awaited Havok also sells out quickly. The one dud in the batch seems to be the Battle Ravaged Wolverine, hinting that collectors might be getting "Batman Syndrome" and are tired of buying endless variations of the same character. Kids will love the figure anyway, as it is well sculpted and has a nice action feature.

Fao Schwartz also offered an exclusive "Dark Phoenix Saga" boxed set in this year's Christmas catalog and it extremely well done. The set comes with Ch'od, Space Wolverine, Corsair and Phoenix with variant paint jobs in a gorgeous display box and is limited to 8,000 sets.

Spawn repaints are also meeting collector apathy, with most collectors focused on the Wetworks and original Spawn lines. White Pilot Spawn is meeting with White Pilot Yawns. The one figure that might have sold in reissue, Malebolgia, was absent, disenchanting many diehards who still have not managed to net one for their collection. Anticipation is high for the Wetworks and Spawn assortments and these should be every bit as hot as the spring line with Werewolf taking over for Malebolgia as the figure everyone is looking for.

G.I. Joe seems to be getting more popular everyday. Dark Horse comics has announced that they will be the publisher of a new series of comic adventures to coincide with an animated series and new line of 5 inch action figures from Kenner/Hasbro.

The recent release of exclusive World War II Joes was met with unprecedented demand. Mobs of people were waiting at Target stores on the September 17th release day, turning the release into a real event. Needless to say the figures have sold out at most locations within hours of hitting the shelves, even with limit policies in force. The figures are extremely nice, featuring loads of accessories and authentic costumes. The packaging was an extremely well designed and individually numbered "book box" much like the 30th anniversary 3 3/4 inch packaging. They also came in three different hair colors; black, brown and blonde. Not all areas of the country have Target stores and these figures look like an good investment at only 15 dollars retail.

Spawn repaints are also meeting collector apathy

Taking It PERSONALLY

By Len Strazewski

Everyone knows that comics professionals live glamorous lives—especially when they guest at comic book conventions. The crowds of fans, the grateful convention promoters and, of course, the general public always excited about meeting a celebrity, provide a heady experience.

I've just returned from a comic book convention in Minneapolis and I thought you might like a glimpse of my high-profile comics lifestyle.

—Arrival, Thursday 12:00 PM at the fabulous Thunderbird Hotel, two days before the convention. I have so many friends in town that I should have come a week early, but this is all the time I can fit into my busy schedule. I planned on a leisurely dinner with my friend and collaborator Paul Fricke.

However, Paul was not available, claiming bruised ribs from a football game with Gordon (STAR TREK) Purcell and Dan (SUPERMAN, SOLAR, SPIDER-MAN) Jurgens. So, I decided to do the scene at the Mall of America and give my fans a treat. I was prepared to throw some celebrity weight around to get a table at Planet Hollywood, but the joint was empty except for a few oral surgeons on convention.

Went back to my hotel and left an answering message for an old college girlfriend who moved to town recently. Called my girlfriend in Chicago, anticipating some sexy phone conversation. She was out.

Went to sleep early sucking my thumb.

—Friday morning, 9:00 a.m. Fired off a few telephone calls scheduling sources for the magazine articles I write in my secret identity as a business journalist. Called Fricke and ordered him to take pain medication and pick me up for lunch or I would never speak to him again. He relented after I agreed to pay.

We had a pleasant lunch at Good Earth, an uptown health food restaurant and Fricke explained why he hadn't finished TERROR TOTS#3, our once-a- year ash can comic. He said we had plenty of #1s and #2s available to sell at the con.

After lunch I spent a hour lounging around the hotel pool and spa, chatting up a little cutie who was attending at Barbie Doll collectors convention. She seemed very impressed with my tales about the comics high life, but had to leave when her grandson arrived to take her to a senior citizens sale at the Mall.

—Friday evening, 8:00 PM, had dinner with Marjie, the college girlfriend who dumped 20 years ago, advising me that I would never amount to anything. She told me it was wonderful to see me and learn that she had been right. After dinner, I took her to a party at Fricke's where I watched Ed Wood's transvestite classic, "Glen or Glenda," while Chas (CHIAROSCURO) Truog chatted with Marjie and flexed his biceps. Chas works out.

—Saturday morning, 10:30 am, first day of the con. I arrive fashionably late to greet the line waiting at my table. I sign about 100 books in a half an hour. Then my two fans leave and I sit around talking with Fricke, Scott (more TROLLORDS) Beaderstadt, and Peter (POWER of SHAZAM) Krause, the nicest man in comics. I

> I sign about 100 books in a half hour, then my two fans leave.

Solar™ & © 1995 Acclaim Comics, Inc.

TAKING IT PERSONALLY (Continued)

Punisher™ & © 1995 Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc.

also said hello to Tom (PUNISHER) Lyle who I used to work with on the DC Impact titles. Tom said, "Kaminski! Good to see you."

Before I could hit him, a crowd moved into the pros room, following behind Jurgens and a surprise guest Mark (FLASH, IMPULSE, CAPTAIN AMERICA) Waid. Waid was in town for a television appearance.

—Saturday, 1:30 PM, Jurgens and Waid's autographing hands finally tire and the three of us split for a private big-time comics pro power lunch. Jurgens discussed his upcoming SPIDER-MAN series and Waid discussed his new role as an X-MEN writer for Marvel. I announced that I sold two TERROR TOTS back issues.

Got my revenge by sticking Waid with the tab, including my cup of coffee.

Got to the panel discussion room just in time to moderate a panel discussion on self-publishing, featuring, among others Colleen (DISTANT SOIL) Doran, one of the most successful and articulate self-publishers in the business. Being a clever as well as famous comics pro, I tried to make a little time with Ms. Doran, also one of the most attractive women in comics.

"Shut up or I'll kick your butt," she told me. I looked deep into her eyes—and realized she probably could do it. Spoke politely to Ms. Doran for the rest of the con—and my life.

Impulse™ & © 1995 DC Comics

—Saturday evening, 7:00 PM, had dinner with an old friend from high school and his wife. Tom is a top environmental engineer at 3M Co. Finally able to get a few words in, I bragged about my high profile career in comics and how famous I was.

He got his revenge by sticking me with tab, including our extensive wine bill.

—Sunday morning, 8:30 AM, woke up in time to watch the new ULTRAFORCE cartoon on television. Waited for two hours until I discovered that its premiere had been postponed for a month. Arrived at the con fashionably late to discover a long line—waiting to see Jurgens, Lyle and Paul (FANTASTIC FOUR) Ryan. Took nap in a leather easy chair I muck in from another part of the hotel.

Later that morning, Marjie arrived with her three children to have them meet a big-time comics professional. "Do you really know Dan Jurgens?" asked an excited Brian, Marjie's young son. "And can you get me his autograph?"

I used my pro status and my elbows to bump us ahead in line and Jurgens not only provided an autograph, but put it on a free copy of his SUPERMAN VS DOOMSDAY: HUNTER/PREY graphic novel. Darn that Jurgens! He's much nicer than I tell people.

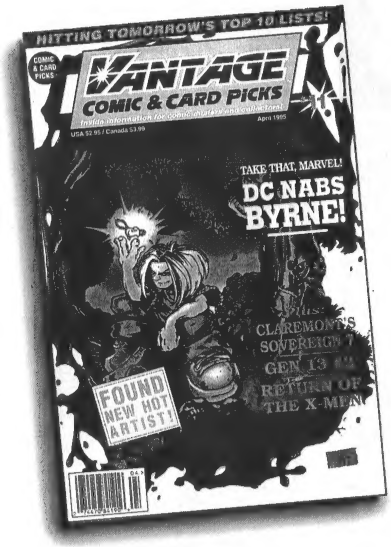
Ultraforce™ & © 1995 Malibu Comics Group, Inc.

—Saturday afternoon, 4 PM, Ms Doran leaves to catch a plane home. I bow politely and stay prepared to duck until the con staff confirmed she had left the hotel.

Later that evening, I arrive fashionably late to the traditional post convention bowling party. Ryan was already demonstrating skills beyond his expressive pencils on FF. Intimidated from joining in, I retreated the game room where Terry (ELFQUEST) Beatty clobbered me at pinball.

Defeated, demoralized, back at the hotel, I called my Chicago sweetheart to brag about another triumphant convention appearance. She wasn't in.

THE DEALER'S SURVIVAL GUIDE.



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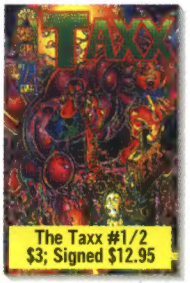
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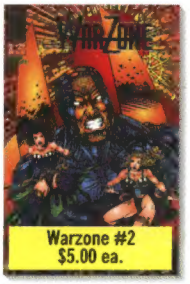
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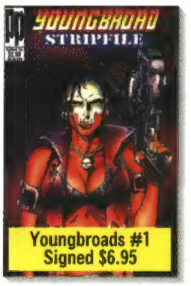
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